What is claimed is:

1. A surgical needle and handle combination for implanting a sling, the needle and handle comprising:

an elongate arcuate needle that is sized and shaped to withstand forces encountered during a sling implantation procedure; the needle having first and second ends; means for associating the needle with a sling, and at least one of the ends having a handle engagement surface,

a handle having means for receiving at least one end of the needle, the handle including a needle end engagement surface, and

handle repositioning means for moving at least one of the needle end engagement surface and the handle engagement surface between a) an engaged position with the needle end engagement surface contacting the handle engagement surface to resist relative movement between the needle and handle, and b) a release position, spaced from the engaged position, which affords relative movement between the handle and the needle.

2. A combination according to claim 1 wherein the first end of the needle has attachment means for associating with either a releasably attachable handle or a dilator associated with the sling, and the second end of the needle has attachment means for associating with either a releasably attachable handle or a dilator of the sling assembly.

3. A combination according to claim 1 wherein the handle repositioning means affords rotational movement and repositioning of the handle relative to the needle.

4. A combination according to claim 1 wherein the handle repositioning means affords axial movement and repositioning of the handle relative to the needle.

5. A combination according to claim 1 further including a second handle.

6. A combination according to claim 1 wherein the handle has first and second opposite ends and the needle emerges from the handle at a second end of the handle, and

the handle repositioning means comprises a button situated near the second end of the handle.

7. A combination according to claim 1 wherein the handle has first and second opposite ends and the needle emerges from the handle at a second end of the handle, and

the handle repositioning means comprises a button situated near the first end of the handle.

8. A surgical needle according to claim 1 wherein the handle and the handle repositioning means comprises a unitary structure.

9. A surgical needle for implanting a sling, the combination comprising:

an elongate arcuate needle that is sized and shaped to withstand forces encountered during a sling implantation procedure; the needle having first and second ends; means for associating the needle with a sling,

a first handle associated with an end of the needle; and

a second handle, separate from the first handle and situated along the needle.

10. A surgical needle according to claim 9 wherein the second handle includes handle repositioning means for affording axial repositioning of the second handle along the length of the needle.

11. A surgical needle according to claim 10 wherein the handle repositioning means of the second handle includes means for moving the second handle axially toward the first handle and for resisting movement of the second handle axially away from the first handle.

12. A surgical needle according to claim 10 wherein the first handle includes means for moving and repositioning the first handle relative to the needle.

13. A surgical needle according to claim 10 wherein the first handle includes gripping means for enhancing manual grasping of the handle.

14. A surgical needle according to claim 10 wherein a portion of the needle extends within the first handle along substantially the entire length of the first handle to enhance attachment of the first handle to the needle.

15. A method of implanting a sling comprising the steps of:

providing an elongate arcuate needle that is sized and shaped to withstand forces encountered during a sling implantation procedure; the needle having first and second ends; and means for associating the needle with a sling, a first handle attached to an end of the needle; and a second handle, separate from the first handle and situated along the needle,

inserting the end of the needle that is opposite the first handle into tissue of the patient;

passing the needle through tissue of the patient by grasping the first or the second handle, the needle or any combination thereof, to control the passage of the needle into tissue.

16. A method of implanting a sling according to claim 15 further including moving the second handle toward the first handle while passing the needle through tissue.

17. A method of implanting a sling comprising the steps of:

providing an elongate arcuate needle that is sized and shaped to withstand forces encountered during a sling implantation procedure; the needle having first and second ends; and means for associating the needle with a sling, a first handle attached to an end of the needle; and a second handle, separate from the first handle and situated along the needle, the second handle including releasable means for securing the second handle to the needle,

placing the second handle in a first position spaced from the first handle to afford a controlled insertion of needle into tissue and to resist lurching movements of the needle within the tissue by affording engagement with abdominal tissue of the patient,

inserting the end of the needle that is opposite the first handle into tissue of the patient;

passing the needle through tissue of the patient an initial amount,

then moving the second handle to a second position that is located closer to the first handle than the first position, and

then further passing the needle through tissue of the patient.